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I, Tamar Shirinian, Ph.D., submit the following in the case of Rula Nabil Khoury Cavaco Dias.

1. I am a Cultural Anthropologist who is an expert on gender, women, and sexuality in the Republic of Armenia. Since 2012, I have spent a total of 24 months doing immersive ethnographic research in and around the capital city of Yerevan on these topics. This means that I have lived in Armenia, participated in communities and organizations advocating for women's rights and against gender-based violence, and have had first-hand experience of the conditions of women in Armenia. Furthermore, I have spent many years following up with my research subjects and the work and cases of organizations through personal communications (including emails, text messages, phone calls, video chats, and social media). I am qualified to testify as an expert regarding women, family, and gender-related issues in Armenia.
2. I received my Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology from Duke University. While completing this degree, I also earned a Certificate in Feminist Studies from the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department at Duke University. These programs provided me with expertise in cross-cultural gender issues, human rights, women's rights, and feminist struggles.
3. From 2017-2019, I was the Director of Women's and Gender Studies at Millsaps College in Jackson, Mississippi, where I taught and mentored students on issues of global conditions of gender and sexuality and managed the curriculum and programming.
4. I am currently an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. There, I am also on the University's Program in Women, Gender, and Sexuality steering committee, where I educate students on these issues, supervise master's and doctoral work for students investigating these issues, and make curricular decisions about the program. Also relevant is my membership on the University's Global Studies steering committee, where I participate in making curricular decisions, supervise graduate students, and teach undergraduate students on issues of globalization and social and cultural differences in varying locales. My expertise on gender, women, and sexuality in a global context, with particular attention to Armenia and the post-Soviet region, is invaluable on that committee.
5. I teach courses on the anthropology of gender, sexuality, human rights, and trauma. I am the co-editor of the "Third Space" section of the *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, which is the primary journal in the U.S. on gender and sexuality within the Middle East. I am currently the Chair of the Association for Queer Anthropology. I have published, to date, fifteen single-authored peer-reviewed articles on gender and sexuality in Armenia. My book, *Survival of a Perverse Nation: Morality and Queer Possibility in Armenia*, which is about gender and sexuality issues and especially right-wing nationalist anti-homosexual and anti-feminist activism in Armenia that enjoys state impunity, is forthcoming with Duke University Press in November 2024. My second book project, *Yakhk! And Other Feminisms from the Second World*, currently in preparation, investigates feminist struggles in Armenia, including the struggle against domestic violence, one of the country's major issues. I have been invited to many

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national and international lectures, conferences, workshops, and seminars to speak about this research.

6. My complete CV is attached to this report as **Exhibit A**.
7. I write this report, and testify in any future hearings related to this case, *pro bono publico*, and am not being compensated for my time spent on this matter.
8. I have been asked to opine on whether or not Armenia—and in particular, its criminal justice mechanisms and community structures—would be able to offer adequate protection to children living in a home with a parent inflicting physical and psychological harm. As my report sets forth below, it is my opinion that women and children in Armenia—especially those who are not themselves Armenian—would not find adequate protections in Armenia.

**I. Domestic Violence in Armenia**

9. A 2020 report by the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, a coalition of organizations with over a decade of experience in dealing directly with women who have experienced domestic violence, their children who have been witness to that violence or victims themselves, as well as with the police in their responses to those experiences, has found that:
  - a. Most women in Armenia do not call the police in cases of violence in the home until their or their children's life is already in severe danger.
  - b. While police officers have the responsibility and obligation to talk to children in the home and assess the danger to their well-being when they are called to the scene, they often rely on an understanding of family reconciliation and most often do not talk to the children in the home or consider any threat to them.
  - c. Because the focus is most often on family reconciliation and restoring "harmony" in the home, police officers often do not record evidence of physical violence on the victim's body, and especially when that evidence is not obviously visible (such as from direct blows to the head or chest that remain covered by hair or clothing).
  - d. The usual response in Armenia of police to domestic violence calls is to issue a "warning" to the perpetrator, especially when it is the first call they receive regarding a perpetrator. This is extremely ineffective. As described above, victims often only call the police in cases of extreme danger but at times after a series of violent events or threats have already occurred. Police often issue warnings in cases where the abuse has been ongoing for many years – sometimes over a decade, because they do not collect enough witness reports and testimonies, especially by the victim or the children, and do not observe the behaviors of the members of the household to effectively assess the situation. Further, "[b]ecause the act of reporting an incident of DV can enrage the abuser even more, it is very important that police have ways to keep the victims and the children safe. Generally, this does not happen."

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- e. Armenia does not have a national domestic violence hotline and instead there are various non-governmental organizations with their own internal hotlines that serve this need. However, those hotlines only operate during the organization's business hours and so even if women know about them and want to reach out, they are usually unavailable when these needs might be at their most severe – in the evenings and at night when all members of the household are at home.
  - f. The only national support for victims of domestic violence is the police, which, as described above, are usually ineffective in recording or preventing domestic violence.<sup>1</sup>
10. Much of my published research on Armenia has examined local understandings of nation, family, and relatedness. For instance, in an article published in *American Ethnologist* (2018), I explain that Armenians understand the nation not as a public space of stranger relations connected through citizenship to the same country, but rather as private and intimate practices that shape Armenians as a part of a large family – what I call, following other anthropologists' arguments about Armenian nationhood (such as Levon Abrahamian), the “nation-family.”<sup>2</sup> Armenians, in other words, see other Armenians as their intimates with whom they are in private familial relations. It is within this framework that domestic violence needs to be understood, because it allows us to see how the public itself comes to protect perpetrators, as their own intimates, toward creating “family harmony.”
  11. Another dimension, relevant to this case, of the “nation-family” is the treatment of ethnic and national “others.” Those who do not belong to Armenia are seen as being separate and deserving of their own privacy with no interference by Armenians. In other words, while Armenians often feel that instances of violence within the Armenian community need to be brought to harmony, often through attempts at reconciliation and protection of the perpetrator in the interest of “family harmony,” foreigners are seen as separate and independent of Armenians and thus deserving their own privacy to work out their own problems. In both instances, the customary practice of the “nation-family” works to ignore and suppress investigation and prosecution of domestic violence as well as its prevention.
  12. In research that I conducted for my forthcoming book, *Survival of a Perverse Nation* (Duke University Press 2024), I came across stories of domestic violence in which it was often repeated that such violence was common in Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, but that it was a personal matter in which police either should not intervene or that police *would not* intervene. Here I outline a small selection of these cases, which are pertinent in understanding the overall landscape in which gender-based violence and domestic violence are regular and normalized in Armenia.

<sup>1</sup> Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, *Challenges and Gaps in Armenia's Response to Domestic Violence*, 27, 29, 37, 60, 68, 74 (2020), <https://coalitionagainstvviolence.am/hy/yntanekan-brnutyan-arjaganqman-mar/>.

<sup>2</sup> Tamar Shirinian, *The Nation-Family: Intimate Encounters and Genealogical Perversion in Armenia*, *American Ethnologist*, 45: 48-59 (2018). Available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/amet.12598>.



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- a. In conducting 150 survey interviews with households across ten different neighborhoods of Yerevan, I found that almost everyone I spoke to agreed that there was “disharmony” and “anger” within the home. This narrative about household discord was frequently relayed to me when I asked my interviewees about domestic violence. Most of those with whom I spoke did not see domestic violence as something that required intervention from outside of the home and often, instead, insisted that neighbors and others should stay out of it. “The problem is with family members understanding how to communicate with one another. There are a lot of reasons to be angry today and it’s not right to bring that anger into the home,” said one of my respondents. One particularly telling interaction shows the ways in which neighbors often know about domestic violence happening within their surroundings and continue to stay out of the way. When I knocked on a door of a residence and it took a while for there to be an answer, the residents’ neighbors (on both sides of the apartment) came out into the hallway to take me aside and away from that residence. When the woman of the house finally did answer, she had bruises on her face and her eyes were entirely swollen. Her two neighbors took me into one of their homes, where they explained to me that that woman had personal matters in her home and it was better that I speak with them instead.
  - b. Prior to beginning fieldwork in Armenia in 2010, I had hired a private tutor to teach me how to read and write in the language to prepare me for research. We would meet at her home in Yerevan. Multiple times when I came to her home in the morning, it had been clear that she had been crying or had been in a fight. One day when I came, she was particularly distraught and told me that her husband had come home late and had been drinking, which was typical, but that this time had been particularly angry and had hit her. When I suggested to my language instructor that she receive support from an organization or that she report the incident, she refused, telling me that this was a family matter. She also questioned whether the police would help with the situation, considering that her husband would tell the police another version of the events and, being men, the police were more likely to believe his story.
  - c. There is widespread and customary belief in Armenia that children need to be disciplined by elders. Hitting children and other punishments are seen as modes of survival for the nation-family, so that children grow up with proper morals. Intervention in this matter is seen as interference of proper Armenian familial relations. I was told during my survey interviews by many of my interviewees that there is too much fuss today about respecting children and not disciplining them. They were referring to the work being attempted by non-profit organizations within civil society. These interviewees opined that this is leading to a society in which children do not respect their elders. In this way, Armenians strongly associate discipline and punishment, including corporal punishment, with morality and a strong nation that can survive.
13. These experiences from my extensive first-hand interviews are not uncommon. “Women who have been interviewed by investigators [in Armenia] state that the detectives in the police

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department are insensitive. For example, women are often asked ‘Why did you leave and then go back to him?’ or ‘Both of you need to get yourselves together, or I’ll contact the Trusteeship and Custodianship Commission and I will take your child from you.’ or ‘You’re testifying against your own husband.’ The police’s approach has left women feeling helpless instead of protected. All the abused women participating in interviews stated that the police did not explain their rights, did not explain the different types of domestic abuse, and were not willing to hear about ongoing violence,’ the report states.”<sup>3</sup>

14. A 2016 a UNFPA report based on a survey in Armenia found that 27.7% of respondents found that there are cases in which women deserve to be beaten, and that 55.4% of respondents agreed that instances exist where it is acceptable for a man to hit a female partner.<sup>4</sup>
15. In 2016, Armenia’s Investigative Committee received recorded 200 cases of criminal violence against children, 88 of which were sexual in nature. In 2017, 265 cases were recorded and 99 were of a sexual nature. In 2018, 317 cases were reported and 76 were of a sexual nature. In 2019, 360 cases were reported and 91 were of a sexual nature. In 2020, 328 cases were recorded and 71 were of a sexual nature. In just the first half of 2021, 278 cases of criminal violence against children were recorded and 57 of them were of a sexual nature.<sup>5</sup> There has been no systematic study of how Armenians perceive violence against children – in the form of corporal punishment, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, humiliation, and deprivation from play and stimulation. However, based on my immersive ethnographic research in the country on the question of family and familial relations, it is clear that punishment in these forms is far more prevalent than those cases reported as crimes.
16. In sum, domestic violence remains a tragically prevalent problem in Armenia, and efforts at prevention – and at bringing perpetrators to justice – are extremely insufficient. This issue is recognized by the United States Department of State, which wrote in its 2023 Country Report for Armenia that “[l]aw enforcement bodies did not effectively investigate or prosecute allegations of domestic violence.”<sup>6</sup> This is because “law enforcement agencies often failed to provide sufficient support and protection to survivors; many survivors felt unsafe at police stations; legal assistance often was lacking for women; courts rarely applied protective measures for survivors and often did not prevent the recurrence of violence; perpetrators often received

<sup>3</sup> Susina Khachatryan, *Those Who Speak Up: Combating Domestic Violence*, EVN Report (Jan. 11, 2023), <https://evnreport.com/raw-unfiltered/those-who-speak-up-combating-domestic-violence/>.

<sup>4</sup> Vladimir Osipov and Jina Sargizova, *Men and Gender Equality in Armenia: Report on Sociological Survey Findings*, Yerevan: UNFPA Program in Armenia, 242, (2016), [https://menengage.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/MEN-AND-GENDER-EQUALITY\\_Final.pdf](https://menengage.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/MEN-AND-GENDER-EQUALITY_Final.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Zara Hovhannisyan, *Combating Child Sexual Abuse*, EVN Report available at <https://evnreport.com/raw-unfiltered/combating-child-sexual-abuse/> (Sep. 30, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2023, Armenia*, 41-42 (2023).





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lenient punishments not involving imprisonment, such as fines; and the heavy judicial caseload often delayed or prevented trials from occurring.”<sup>7</sup> Further, “harmful gender stereotyping, secondary victimization, victim-blaming, and disbelief in survivors’ testimonies were serious problems in the investigation and prosecution of cases.”<sup>8</sup> For example, “[e]ven when survivors of abuse make the difficult decision to go to law enforcement, their cases are often not seen all the way through. In 2018, the Investigative Committee examined 519 criminal cases of domestic abuse, of which only 82 were sent to court with an indictment; 635 cases were examined in 2019, of which 326 were dismissed, while 128 were sent to court with an indictment. In 2020, 730 cases were examined of which 356 cases were dismissed, while 129 were sent to court with an indictment. This trend shows that most domestic violence cases are dismissed.”<sup>9</sup>

## II. A Brief History of Women’s Rights in Armenia

17. From 2012-2013 I worked at the Women’s Resource Center (“WRC”), one of the first feminist organizations in Armenia and a founding member of the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women. These organizations provide various services, including legal services for women who have survived domestic violence. Here I will outline just a few examples of the work of these organizations from recent history to give a sense of the gendered landscape in the country.

- a. The fight for a law that would prevent and prosecute domestic violence in Armenia took off amongst women’s organizations, and especially by the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, in 2011 following the brutal death of Zaruhi Petrosyan at the hands of her husband, Yanis Sarkisov. Ms. Petrosyan died of a crushed skull, but she also had broken knees and broken fingers after sustaining beatings for days by her husband and with the knowledge of her mother-in-law. Ms. Petrosyan’s sister told authorities that when her sister tried to call for help, her husband broke her fingers. Mr. Sarkisov, even after receiving a mere 10-year sentence for the crime, denied any responsibility for the death and said that his wife had fallen and died. Although the 10-year sentence was quite low for the brutal crime, because violence of this kind often leads to acquittals in Armenian courts or far more minimal sentences, even that sentence was considered a victory for advocates of women’s rights in the country.
- b. In 2013, the National Assembly of Armenia passed a law officially titled “Protecting Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities Between Men and Women.” The law used the term “gender” within its Article III, defined as the “acquired, socially fixed behavior of the different sexes.” Protests in Yerevan condemned the passing of this law, which was

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<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 42.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 42-43.

<sup>9</sup> *See supra* note 3; *see also id.* (discussing a 2022 study that found 31.8% of Armenian woman were subject to psychological abuse by husbands or partners, 6.6% were victims of sexual abuse, and 14.8% were victims of physical abuse).



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seen as an attempt to destroy the Armenian family and proper men's and women's roles in the nation. Members of the Armenian Apostolic Church, a trusted institution in Armenia, led these protests.

- c. The director of WRC regularly received hate messages in person and online, referring to her as a "faggot," a "grant-eater" (a reference to the popular idea that nongovernmental organizations in the country were being paid to spread homosexuality and other perverse ideas in the country), and a "nation-betrayer" for her work on preventing violence against women.
  - d. In 2009, WRC had organized a "mock burial" of "the red apple" that began with a march through the city center ceremoniously carrying a large papier maché red apple. The protest was a sort of political performance that challenged the tradition of the "red apple" in Armenia. The red apple tradition, which is still practiced in many parts of Armenia, including Yerevan, requires that the women from the groom's family deliver a basket of red apples to the newly married couple the morning after nuptials, during which they also check the sheets of the bed for a red spot and hang the sheet outside the house to celebrate the purity of the bride. While not all families practice all elements of this tradition (for instance, it is rare in Yerevan for the sheet to be publicly displayed), other parts of it (for instance, the delivery of the red apples) are still observed and many young women find it humiliating. This mock burial, symbolizing a call and demand to end a humiliating and demeaning tradition, was taken by various bloggers and right-wing nationalist activists in the country as an act against the nation. In 2012, I interviewed the eight staff members of WRC, seven of whom were heterosexual women in their 20s. All of the women had experienced difficulties in their personal and social lives following this mock burial when WRC became framed publicly as an organization that is aiming to pervert Armenian society, including those who had not yet been working at WRC when the mock burial had been performed. As WRC was known as a place for "perverts," two of them told me that they kept their place of work secret from their families, which was difficult considering both of them lived with their families. One of these women explained that her brother spoke often about feminists and others who worked at "women's organizations" as "perverts" who were threatening the nation and feared for her safety in her home if she were to be found out. Another young woman told me that her domestic and nuclear family knew that she worked at WRC, but that it was kept a secret from her larger extended family. Her parents feared that if others knew, there would be shame on the family. All of the women had been called a lesbian at least once, even two of the women who were married to men.
18. These examples are all extremely recent and serve to show that Armenian attitudes towards gender are in many ways damaging toward women, particularly in the context of women's rights in the home and to protect themselves from their husbands.

### **III. Armenia's Insufficient Efforts to Combat Domestic Violence**

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19. Despite the epidemic of domestic violence in Armenia, legislative efforts to combat the issue have been slow, insufficient, and stifled by cultural resistance to gender equality and women's rights in domestic life.
20. Armenia's domestic violence law was originally adopted in 2017, and was titled "Preventing violence in the family, protecting the victims of violence in the family, and restoring harmony in the family." This law was seen as the "first mechanisms for preventing domestic violence and protecting survivors of abuse" in Armenia.<sup>10</sup> The law was a major compromise from what women's organizations had been advocating for, and was insufficient to keep victims of domestic violence (i.e., women and children) safe. As the title of that law suggests, the law's focus was on reconciliation between perpetrators and victim of abuse in domestic violence cases—not on protecting the victim or her children. The law contradicted local and international legal norms by focusing on the family rather than an individual and her safety, and it did not adequately define domestic violence or "harmony."
21. As has been stated by Zara Hovhannisyan,<sup>11</sup> a very prominent human rights activist in Armenia, there is evidence that the domestic violence law was only initiated by the Armenian state as a response to the European Commission's 2017 threat that if the government of Armenia did not pass such a law, it would no longer be eligible for human rights grants. Prior to the Republic of Armenia National Assembly's initiation of a law regarding domestic violence, it had rejected a draft law prepared by the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women in 2013 and claimed that it was not feasible because it was too expensive. Although OSCE data showed that 60%<sup>12</sup> of Armenian women had experienced domestic violence at least once, the government still did not consider it feasible to pass a law until 2017. This indicates a lack of political will to prevent domestic violence and to create structures that enforce prevention.
22. When the government finally did pass the law in 2017, there was major backlash amongst the public with widespread claims that the law was an attempt to destroy the Armenian family.<sup>13</sup> Members of the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women have experienced threats and public harassment as a result of their involvement with advocating for the law. Protests and harassment toward members of the coalition have continued with the process of revising the law. In April 2024, a revision of the original bill was passed, removing "family harmony" from the title and

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<sup>10</sup> See Khachatryan, *supra* note 3.

<sup>11</sup> Maria Koltsova, "Pass a Law, Even If It's a Bad One": How Armenia Is Tackling Domestic Violence, OpenDemocracy, (Jan. 21, 2020) <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/armenia-domestic-violence-law/>.

<sup>12</sup> Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Bringing Safety Home: Combating Violence Against Women in the OSCE Region, (June 2009), <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/d/b/37438.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Maria Koltsova, "Pass a law, even if it's a bad one": how Armenia is tackling domestic violence, Open Democracy (Jan. 21, 2020 at 12:01 AM), <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/armenia-domestic-violence-law/>.





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creating a stronger plan of prevention.<sup>14</sup> This has also come with backlash – protests and harassment of advocates. In sum, there is an enormous and ongoing cultural backlash in Armenia to efforts to curb domestic violence, which is indicative of the attitudes in the country towards the issue. A 2022 CEDAW Report highlights that the Armenian state does not adequately protect women’s and human rights advocates against this backlash.<sup>15</sup>

23. In April 2018, a popular social movement ousted Serzh Sargsyan from power. The movement replaced him with Nikol Pashinyan, an economic liberal and more socially oriented toward liberal social values. Pashinyan attempted to bring progressive organizations, including WRC, into the fold of government by setting up systems where members of these organizations could provide counsel and advise his “team,” a term that Pashinyan used to talk about his government and close advisors. He aspired toward civil society cooperating with the government rather than against the government. While this may appear to have made the gender-based violence situation in the country better, and many were hopeful at the time, this has not necessarily been the case.
  - a. Pashinyan’s government, which was brought to power through a populist movement, was seen shortly thereafter as destroying the “traditional nation.” Much of these feelings have been fueled by members of the old regime who still have control over much of the military and many of the courts. While Pashinyan, in his first year and a half in office and before the political situation became tense by the beginning of the Second Karabakh War in 2020, tried to charge the elite of the old regime with crimes of corruption and treason, these attempts have largely failed. These members of the old regime use the institutions in which they have power to propel backlash against many progressive moves by the central government and try to use these manipulated public sentiments to come back to power. An example of this was the 2024 *srbazan Hayasdan*, or “holy Armenia” movement, a protest staged by the Bagrat Galstanyan, a cleric of the Armenian Apostolic Church who attempted to oust Pashinyan from power by producing public sentiment about his failures to save Armenian land and his immorality that is moving Armenia away from its proper, holy, path. These movements, which are propped up by the oligarchy in many cases, have had the effect of manifesting continued moral concern around the family, gender and sexuality, which propels more backlash against women’s organizations and the struggle against domestic violence. All of this should also be seen

<sup>14</sup> See Ani Jilozian, Armenia’s Domestic Violence Law Is Dramatically Improved, The Armenian Weekly (April 16, 2024), <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/04/16/armenias-domestic-violence-law-is-dramatically-improved/#:~:text=On%20April%2012%2C%20Armenia's%20National,vio%20accountable%20for%20their%20crimes.>

<sup>15</sup> United Nations, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW/C/ARM/CO/7, Concluding Observations on the Seventh Periodic Report on Armenia (November 1, 2022), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/concluding-observations/cedawcarmco7-concluding-observations-seventh-periodic-report>.



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in light of overwhelming agreement in scholarship on women in times of war that war and conflict inevitably give a rise to domestic violence and gender-based violence, including in Armenia.<sup>16</sup>

- b. One of the main programs of the new regime has been police reform, through which the new government aimed to replace the old police force that was seen as corrupt and brutal, with a new “Patrol Police Department,” which was to protect civilians rather than punish and issue citations. The new Police Patrol Department was to set up the police as a force to protect human rights rather than punish civilians and especially during protests. This reform program, according to much of civil society in the country, has largely failed. While there was a rise in the approval rating among of the public of the new police force and the reforms in 2020, there has been a decline in trust of police by civil society. The first major mistake that Pashinyan was seen in making is the appointment of Vahe Ghazaryan, the Head of the Ijevan Police Department, as the new Armenian Chief of Police. Ghazaryan represents many of the failures of the old regime and its corruption and brutality. This distrust, since 2020, has been confirmed by the police crackdown on protests against Pashinyan’s government, especially after the failures of the 2020 and the 2023 Karabakh wars. Prominent cases of crackdown and violence on spaces used by LGBTQ+ people, such as the 2023 raid of Poligraf Nightclub in which police used violence and force against everyone in the club and even subjected some attendees to verbal humiliation and strip searches, also show that the gendered and sexual values and ideas about propriety and tradition amongst members of the police force have not changed.<sup>17</sup>

24. In 2018, Armenia signed, but did not ratify the Istanbul Convention, which works to prevent violence against women and defines that violence as gender-based violence.<sup>18</sup> As a preliminary matter, this means that Armenia is not formally bound by any of the terms in the Istanbul Convention.<sup>19</sup> But even so, there has been a great deal of protest against this action in the

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Sevan Beukian, *Motherhood as Armenianness: Expressions of Femininity in the Making of Armenian National Identity*, 14 *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 247 (2014); Nona Shahnazaryan, *A Good Soldier and a Good Mother: New Conditions and New Roles in the Nagorno-Karabakh War*, *The Journal of Power Institutions in Post-Soviet Societies*, June 2016; Armine Ishkanian, *En-gendering Civil Society and Democracy-Building: The Anti-Domestic Violence Campaign in Armenia*, 14 *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 488.

<sup>17</sup> See U.S. Dep’t of State, Bureau of Democracy, H.R. and Lab., 2023 Human Rights Report on Armenia 53 (2023).

<sup>18</sup> *Chart of Signatures and Ratifications of Treaty 210*, Counsel of Europe Treaty Office, available from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list?module=signatures-by-treaty&treaty=210> (last accessed Sept. 23, 2024).

<sup>19</sup> See *Glossary*, Counsel of Europe Treaty Office, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/glossary> (defining “signature” as “Signature of a treaty is an act by which the State expresses its interest to the



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country. Various organizations and initiatives have argued that it goes against Armenia's constitution because it uses the term "gender" and thus seeks to introduce into Armenian law the possibility of third or fourth genders which would also lead to homosexual marriages and thus bring "sexual perversion" to the country. There are also widespread narratives within Armenian public consciousness that attempts at preventing gender-based violence and domestic violence are dangerous to the traditional family and dangerous to proper heterosexual relations between men and women.

25. In April 2024, feminist organizations were successful in passing a revision of the 2017 domestic violence law that provides some avenue for justice for those victimized by domestic violence in the country.<sup>20</sup> Among other things, this amendment more clearly defines domestic violence to cover more forms of abuse beyond just physical abuse, and provides stronger sanctions for perpetrators convicted of crimes related to domestic abuse.<sup>21</sup> The amendment also removes the phrase "family harmony" from the title of the law.<sup>22</sup>
26. But as noted above, attitudes toward gender, domestic violence, and the family remain harmful in Armenia, and the mere passage of this law will not fix things.
  - a. For example, staff members at Women's Support Center, Women's Resource Center, and Society Against Violence (all member organizations of the Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women) have stated that while there is now a law, women often do not know about it. And even when victims do know about the new law, women hesitate to come forward for fear of being shamed, their claims being ignored, or retaliation by husbands and other family members.
  - b. Further, and perhaps most perniciously, police and other workers of the state retain gender values that continue to characterize domestic violence as "private" and "family" concerns in which others should not interfere. This pervasive attitude means that even

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treaty and its intention to become a Party. The State is not bound by the signature. However, he has the obligation not to defeat the object and purpose of the treaty until it has made its intention clear not to become a Party to the treaty (See Article 18 of the Vienna Convention).")

<sup>20</sup> See Ani Jilozian, *Armenia's Domestic Violence Law Is Dramatically Improved*, The Armenian Weekly (April 16, 2024), available from <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/04/16/armenias-domestic-violence-law-is-dramatically-improved/#:~:text=On%20April%2012%2C%20Armenia's%20National,vio%20accountable%20for%20their%20crimes.>

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> Anahit Chilingaryan, *Armenia Strengthens Domestic Violence Law*, Human Rights Watch (April 18, 2024 at 12:32 PM), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/18/armenia-strengthens-domestic-violence-law#:~:text=New%20Amendments%20Address%20Gaps%20in,stalking%20as%20a%20standalone%20crime.>

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when incidents of violence are reported, police, courts, and other state actors often do not act upon those reports in a meaningful way.

27. An extensive quote from a 2020 Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women report outlines how enforcement remained a critical problem after the original 2017 law, and likely will continue to remain a critical problem as the newly adopted April 2024 amendment is applied in real time:

Domestic violence continues to be a serious social problem in Armenia. The results of the Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 2017 in Armenia showed that 4 out of 10 women victims of physical and sexual violence have never made public the fact of violence. The “Men and gender equality” sociological research conducted in 2016 by the United Nations Population Fund has revealed that the society in Armenia tends to justify violence against women. 27.7% of the respondents thought that “in certain cases women deserve beating.” According to the annual report of the Human Rights Defender, during 2018, 707 cases of domestic violence were registered, including 673 cases of physical violence, 33 of psychological violence and 1 of economic violence. In 441 of those cases the violence was perpetrated by the husband against the wife. In 32 cases the violence was perpetrated by the wife against the husband; in 48 cases the violence was perpetrated by the parent against the son/daughter; in 48 cases the violence was perpetrated by the son/daughter against the parent; and in 116 cases other family members were cited. According to data provided by the Police, 435 Warning Orders and 132 Emergency Intervention Orders (EIO) were issued on domestic violence cases in 2018.

During 2018, the Investigative Committee has examined 519 criminal cases of domestic violence, of which 393 criminal cases of domestic violence have undergone completed investigations. 297 of those criminal cases have been dismissed: 91 on the ground of acquittal and 206 cases not on the ground of acquittal.

According to data provided by the Prosecution Office, during 2018, 406 criminal cases have been initiated on the same number of incidents of domestic violence. However, the real number of cases of gender-based violence is unknown because the problem remains hidden. DV Support Centers NGOs normally report a larger number of cases than those reported by state bodies. There are no publicly available detailed official statistics on the problem of gender-based violence and its impact on women and their families.

From the above data we notice that almost half of the DV cases have been dismissed by the investigators of the Investigative Committee and this indicates the lack of a victim-centered approach as well as the lack of criminalization, which leaves the abusers unaccountable for their actions and discourages women from pursuing long-term court trials.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Coalition to Stop Violence Against Women, *supra* note 1, at 16-17.



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28. In sum, Armenia's treatment of domestic violence has been ineffective. And while the new law—passed in April 2024—is a step in the right direction, the practical effects of that law remain to be seen. Further, because of the country's pervasive cultural attitudes towards gender roles and domestic disputes, it is highly unlikely that the new law significantly changes the circumstances on the ground for victims of domestic violence, at least in the short to medium term.

#### **IV. Applications To This Case**

29. In addition to opining on domestic violence in Armenia generally, I have been asked to provide an opinion regarding Ms. Dias' case, and the risks she and her children would face if forced to return to Armenia.
30. Based on what I have learned about Ms. Dias' case and my expertise as a Cultural Anthropologist who specializes in gender and sexuality, rights violations, and my particular expertise in these issues within the Republic of Armenia, I am certain that Ms. Dias' life and the lives of her children would be in great danger should she return to Armenia.
31. To begin, I understand that if her children were forced to return to Armenia, where they would be under the supervision of their father, Ms. Dias would also necessarily return to Armenia. Her three children are young (all currently under the age of 10), and Ms. Dias is the primary caretaker of the children, one of whom requires physiotherapy. Accordingly, if the children were returned to Armenia, I understand that Ms. Dias would also have to return to Armenia, and would necessarily interact with Mr. Dias to share custody and care for the children.
32. Based on my understanding of the details and the evidence of this case (and at the time of this report, I understand that discovery is ongoing, and evidence still being gathered and produced by both sides). Based on the context of domestic violence in Armenia described above, and based on the credible allegations made by Ms. Dias against Mr. Dias of domestic violence, Ms. Dias would have very little protection or recourse from state institutions in Armenia. It is likely that the police would strive to allow the family to "deal" with their own affairs rather than getting involved, and that the police or judicial system as a whole would be unlikely to protect Ms. Dias or the children from further abuse.
33. These conclusions are bolstered by a few factors. First, and critically, Ms. Dias and Mr. Dias are foreigners in Armenia. Based on Armenian structures of custom and community, they would be seen as people who ought to be left to work out their own affairs rather than face intervention of other people (i.e., Armenians) and their institutions (police, law, courts, public organizations, and the Armenian national community). It is unlikely that the police would intervene and protect Ms. Dias in the case that she called for help after being threatened or experiencing psychological abuse at the hands of Mr. Dias.
34. Being foreign creates additional risk for Ms. Dias and the children. I understand that neither Ms. Dias nor any of her children speak or read Armenian. This further isolates the family from the

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broader community and adds another barrier to Ms. Dias receiving what little protection the Armenian state may offer.

35. Further, I understand that Ms. Dias works remotely. Accordingly, she has far fewer social contacts in Armenia than does Mr. Dias. Armenia is a foreign country to her, where she does not have any family, relatives, or close friends. Additionally, not one member of the family can speak Armenian. These social networks are critical in Armenia as much of social and public life operates through the understanding of what is locally called *KhTsB*, which stands for *khnami*, *tsanot*, *barekam* (in-laws, relatives, friends) and in which one depends on who they know and what they know through their social networks to get access to services, information, and support. This makes Ms. Dias far more vulnerable in Armenia than a typical Armenian woman with a family and social network. Exacerbating this problem, men are more trusted by other men in public office, and thus Mr. Dias' word would mean far more than Ms. Dias' in any potential action.
36. Ms. Dias' lack of close social relationships in Armenia would isolate her and make it difficult for her to seek help in the case of further psychological and physical abuse.
37. Ms. Dias' gender and social isolation would have an additive effect. Aside from being a woman in a society that places far more value on men than women, her lack of social network would also lead to her being less trusted than Mr. Dias by the police, in court, and in public and social opinion (e.g., by neighbors and other acquaintances).
38. I write this report, as an expert on gender, sexuality, and human rights in Armenia to state clearly and definitively that I strongly believe, based on everything that I know, that Ms. Dias' life would be in very serious danger if her children were forced to return to Armenia. I understand from counsel that Ms. Dias would have to return to Armenia herself, either to live or to escort the children and supervise them while they are with their father. In this case, it is very likely based on the details of this case and what we know about domestic violence and abuse, that the abuse would continue and that she would have little recourse by the police and by the courts. In this case, Ms. Dias' life and well-being, as well as the well-being of the children, would be gravely threatened.
39. Based on the factors outlined above, it is my opinion that Armenian authorities would not provide sufficient protection from harm for the children and Ms. Dias in Armenia if they were forced to return.

I declare, under penalty of perjury, that the foregoing is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

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09/23/2024

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Tamar Shirinian, Ph.D.

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Date

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# Exhibit A

**Tamar Shirinian, Ph.D.**

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**CURRENT POSITION**

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| August 2021 – present | Assistant Professor<br>Department of Anthropology<br>University of Tennessee - Knoxville |
|-----------------------|--|

**PAST POSITIONS**

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| August 2019 – July 2021  | Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow<br>Department of Anthropology<br>University of Tennessee - Knoxville          |
| August 2016 – July 2018  | Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow<br>Department of Sociology and Anthropology<br>Millsaps College – Jackson, MS |
| April 2017 – July 2018   | Co-Director<br>Women's and Gender Studies Program<br>Millsaps College – Jackson, MS                        |
| April 2014 – August 2016 | Managing Editor<br><i>Journal of Middle East Women's Studies</i>   |

**EDUCATION**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Ph.D.<br>2016 | Duke University, Department of Cultural Anthropology,<br>Feminist Studies Certificate<br>Dissertation Title: <i>Survival of a Perverse Nation: Sexuality and Kinship in Post-Soviet Armenia</i><br>Committee Chair: Diane M. Nelson<br>Committee: Anne Allison, Anne-Maria Makhulu, Ara Wilson, Tomas Matza |
|---------------|---|

B.A.

2007

University of California – Berkeley

Gender and Women's Studies

## **FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION**

Queer Anthropology

Queer Theory

Feminist Anthropology

Transnational Feminisms

Post-Soviet and Postsocialist Studies

Armenian Studies

Media Studies and Digital Culture

Nationalism and Ethnonationalism

Trauma Studies

Genocide Studies

Social Movements

Revolution and Post-Revolutionary

Societies

Kinship Studies

Social Reproduction Theory

Environmental Anthropology

Psychological and Psychoanalytic

Anthropology

War and Post-War Societies

Decolonization

## **SCHOLARSHIP**

### **Ongoing Research Projects**

*The Futures of the Past: Political Imaginaries from the End of History*

### **Books**

In preparation. *Yakhq! and Other Feminisms from the Second World*

2024. *Survival of a Perverse Nation: Morality and Queer Possibility in Armenia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

### **Special Issues**

In preparation. A Political Economy of Intimate Life: Social Reproduction Revisited. *Research in Economic Anthropology*.

2018. Co-Guest Editor with Carina Karapetian Giorgi. "[Queering Armenian Studies](#)." *Armenian Review* 56 (1-2).

Co-authored Preface: Shirinian, Tamar and Carina Girorgi Karapetian. 2018. "Queering and Querying Mode(s) and Object(s) of Study." *Armenian Review*, 56 (1-2): iv-vii.

### **Peer-reviewed Articles and Book Chapters**

In Preparation. "Introduction: The Intimate as an Object of Political Economy." *Research in Economic Anthropology*.



- In Preparation. "Expanding the Sacrifice Zone: Toward a Deterritorialized Map of Woman, Environment, and Many Objects in Between." For submission to *Dialectical Anthropology*
- Under Review. "Perversion: A Queer Theory of Social Reproduction." *Research in Economic Anthropology*.
- In Revision. "Shifting the Grammar of Human Rights Language: Radical Humanism Beyond Man and the Posthuman with Armenian Grassroots Politics." *Journal of Human Rights*.
2024. Co-authored with Nelli Sargsyan. "Life-Sustaining Transboundary Survival: Rethinking Armenian Struggles for Heritage." *International Journal of Heritage Studies*.
2023. "Feminist Pedagogies on the Frontlines: Struggling Against a Mine, Struggling Against Patriarchy." *Gender and Society* no 37(5): 727-749.
2022. "'We Don't Have a Daddy!': Marking Armenia's 2018 'Velvet Revolution' as a Site of Contesting Patriarchy." *Feminist Formations* no 34(2): 125-145.
2022. "To Foresee the Unforeseeable: LGBT and Feminist Civil Society and the Question of Feminine Space in Postsocialist Armenia." In *Is Female to Male as NGO is to State?* edited by Andria Timmer and Elizabeth Wirtz, 240-263. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
2021. "Post-War Specters: The Ghosts that Haunt Armenia in the Aftermath of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabagh War." *Caucasus Analytics Digest*. March 2021 (No. 119): 9-15.
2021. "The Illiberal East: The Gender and Sexuality of the Imagined Geography of Eurasia in Armenia." *Gender, Place and Culture: Journal for Feminist Geography* no 28(7): 955-974.
2020. "Love and the Liminality of Revolution: Interpersonal Relations and Transformations In-Between the April-May Events in Armenia." *Anthropology and Humanism* no 45 (2): 322-338.
2020. "Intimate Sovereigns: Political Fatherhood and the Limits of Power in Armenia." *Cultural Dynamics* Special Issue: "Intimate Workings of Culture" 32(3): 213-229
2019. "Fakeness: Digital Inauthenticity and Emergent Political Tactics in Armenia." *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review* no. 42 (2): 347-361.
2019. "Gender Hysteria: The *Other* Effect of Public Policy in Armenia." In *Sexuality, Human Rights, and Public Policy*, edited by Chima J. Korieh and Elizabeth O. Onogwu, 115-130. Lanham, Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.
2018. "The Nation-Family: Intimate Encounters and Genealogical Perversion in Postsocialist Armenia." *American Ethnologist* no. 45 (1): 48-59.
2018. "A Room of One's Own: Woman's Desire and Queer Domesticity in the Republic." *Armenian Review* 56 (1-2): 61-90.
2018. "Queer Life-Worlds in Postsocialist Armenia: *Alternativ* Space and the Possibilities of In/Visibilities," *QED: A Journal in GLBTQ World-making* 5 (1): 1-23.
2017. "Erkeklerden Sonra: Kurgusal Bir Etnografi [After Men: a Fictional Ethnography]," translated into Turkish by Cagri Yoltar. *Jineoloji* 7: 123-136.
2017. "Sovereignty as a Structure of Feeling: The Homosexual within Post-Cold War Armenian Geopolitics." *lamda nordica*, 2-3: 93-124.

## Editor-reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

- In Press. "Afterword: Reconsidering the Queer Political, or Against the Identitarian Liberal Turn." *LGBTQ+ Visibilities in the Caucasus and Central Asia*. New York: Routledge.
2024. "Nightlife as Queer Political Method." *Mediapolis: A Journal of Cities and Culture* vol 9 (2). <https://www.mediapolisjournal.com/2024/06/nightlife-queer-political-method/>
2023. "Toward a Queer Postnational Politics: Imagining the Nation Not Surviving." *Ab Imperio* no 2023 (1): 59-75.
2022. "Collective Study and the Possibilities of Becoming: Between a Feminist Space in Yerevan and the U.S." In *Queer Sharing in the Marketized University*, edited by Churnjeet Mahn, Matt Brim, and Yvette Taylor, 63-78. New York: Routledge.
2022. "Armenian Studies in Middle East Studies: Internationalism and Solidarity." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* no 54(3): 589-593.
2021. "Political Patriarchy: Gendered Hierarchies, Paternalism, and Public Space in Armenia's 'Velvet Revolution,' in *Armenia's Velvet Revolution: Authoritarian Decline and Civil Resistance in a Multipolar World*, edited by Laurence Broers and Anna Ohanyan, 181-200. London: I.B. Tauris.
2020. "Querying Identity: Misrecognition as Performative Refusal in Armenian LGBT Advocacy." In *Decolonizing Queer Experience and Performance: LGBT+ Narratives from Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, edited by Emily Channell-Justice, 37-54. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
2020. Co-authored with Emily Channell-Justice. "Of Constatives, Performatives, and Disidentifications: Decolonizing Queer Critique in Postsocialist Times" (Introduction). In *Decolonizing Queer Experience and Performance: LGBT+ Narratives from Eastern Europe and Eurasia*, edited by Emily Channell-Justice, 1-14. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

## Reviews and Review Essays

2020. "Diasporas' Queer Archives: Innovating Visions Through Gayatri Gopinath's Theory and Method." *Diaspora*, 21 (1):87-98.
2018. "A Note on Cover Art: A conversation with lucine talalyan." *Armenian Review*, 56 (1-2): 131-132.
2018. "The Gender and Sexuality of Armenia: A Debut." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 14 (1): 217-220.
2016. "After Love: *Queer Intimacies and Erotic Economies in Post-Soviet Cuba* by Noelle M. Stout." *Feminist Review*, 114 (1): 149-151.

## Published Interviews and Public Discussions

- July 30, 2020. [Conversation with Gayane Ayyvazyan](#). *Radio Antenna*, a Project for the Yerevan Biennale. Yerevan, Armenia.
2019. "[Tamar Shirinian on Digital Fakeness in Armenia: PoLAR Author Interview](#)." In *PoLAR: Journal of Political and Legal Anthropology*, edited by Mei-chun Lee.
- July 9, 2018. *Dialogues with Power Project* Video Interview. Yerevan, Armenia  
Invited to give [an interview about Bolshevik feminism and radical potentials of intimate](#).

[life](#) for art historian Susanna Gyulamiryan's video and book project entitled *Dialogues with Power*.

## Public Scholarship

- August 7, 2024. "Psychotic Little Worlds." *Revolutionary Health* (in-print annual paper).
- November 8, 2023. ["A plea to all Armenians to think about the genocide of the Palestinians."](#) *The Armenian Weekly*.
- October 19, 2023. ["A Queer Plea for the End of the Nation."](#) *NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia Blog*.
- April 22, 2021. ["What trauma does and what recognition might mend."](#) *The Armenian Weekly*.
- October 31, 2020. ["Becoming Armenian."](#) *Voices on Karabakh War: A Symposium of Thoughts*. University of Southern California Dornsife Institute of Armenian Studies.
- October 6, 2020. ["The Violence of Dispassionate Objectivity."](#) *re-imagining catastrophe: a UTK Anthropology Blog*.
2019. "Feminism and the State in Armenia: From Bolsheviks to NGOs." In *Dialogues with Power*, edited by Susanna Gyulamiryan, 70-99. Yerevan: Antenor Printing House.
- December, 2017. ["Decolonizing Armenia: Tensions in Theory and Practice."](#) *Heinrich Böll Foundation*.
- December, 2016. ["The Armenian Violence Question: A Conversation on Means and Social Change."](#) Digital Conversation with Nelli Sargsyan. *Public Seminar*.
- June 22, 2016. ["The Queer Political is Geopolitical."](#) *American Anthropological Association Blog*.
- February, 2016. "Saying 'No!': Negation as Future-Making." *Anthropology News*.
- December, 2015. ["Observations on 'Doing Psychoanalysis in Tehran': Between Psychoanalysis as Practice and Social Theory."](#) For "Scholars Notebook" on *IslamiCommentary: A Forum for Public Scholarship*.
- February, 2013. ["Nationalism and Sexuality in Modern Armenian Discourse."](#) *New Eastern Politics*.
- April, 2012. ["Azgaynakanutyunn u serakanutyuny ardi hayasdanyan diskursum \[in Armenian\]."](#) *Hetq*.
- November, 2012. ["The History of the Concept of 'Gender'."](#) *As You E-magazine*, 6<sup>th</sup> edition.
- March, 2013. ["Double Discrimination and Systematic Social Inequality."](#) *As You E-magazine*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition.
- March, 2013. ["The Myths People Tell About Family and Sexuality: Traveling from the U.S. to Armenia as a Researcher."](#) *As You E-magazine*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition.

## SELECTED PRESENTATIONS

### Invited Lectures

- November 8, 2023. "What is Queer Anthropology?" Undergraduate Anthropology Association for Stonybrook College, Stonybrook, NY (Virtual).
- July 14, 2023. Green Laboratory, Heinrich Boll Foundation. Hermon, Armenia.

Gave a talk entitled “Objects of Struggle: Woman, Environment, Colonialism.”  
 April 12, 2023. Virtual Lecture Series, Commission for LGBT People and Pride Center, University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Gave a talk entitled “Queer Hatred and its Political Economic Roots”  
 March 25, 2022. Invited to the *East Europe: Critical Encounter Seminar Series*, Robert Penn Warren Center for the Humanities, Vanderbilt University

Led a seminar around work-in-progress entitled “The Politics of ‘No!’”  
 November 19, 2021. Annual Distinguished Lecture for the Committee for the Anthropology of Science, Technology, and Computing, Virtual, as a part of the American Anthropological Association meetings in Baltimore, ML.

Lecture entitled “A Politics without Authenticity: Thinking through the Pitfalls and Potentialities of ‘Fake’ in Armenia.”  
 April 7, 2021. Harriman Institute of Columbia University Visiting Lecture Series Invited to give a talk entitled “The War Between the Wars: Condensed Spatiotemporalities and Figures of Threat in Armenia”

March 3, 2021. Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, Book Talk on *Decolonizing Queer Experience* (Lexington Books 2020)

February 10, 2021 Harvard Law School Program on Law and Society in the Muslim World, Book talk on Andrew J. Bush’s *Between Muslims* (2020, Stanford University Press)

July 18, 2020 Without Borders International Virtual Forum, FemLibrary, Yerevan, Armenia

Invited to give a talk entitled “Feeling Time and Space in the Present/ce of Pandemic, Fascism, and the Capitolocene”

April 15, 2020 Virtual Guest Lecture for “Global Queer Activism” course at College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA

Invited to share research on sexuality and fake news

December 17, 2017 *Freedom (Not) Yet Again*, Queering Yerevan Happening, Yerevan, Armenia.

Invited to give a lecture entitled “Love as Revolutionary Politics in the War Years” as part of a three-day happening organized by the Queering Yerevan Collective.

October 3-4, 2017 Visiting Lecture Series on Violence, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Invited to give two lectures: “Fighting Back: Queers’ and Women’s Uses of Violence as Forms of Resistance” at the undergraduate level and “Queering Violence: Militarization, Imperialism and Homonationalism” at the graduate level.

July 25, 2017 Queer as a Way of Life, *Teynik* Café, Vanadzor, Armenia

Invited to speak to young activists in Armenia about the concept “queer” and its potentials for conceptualizing action

March 25, 2017 Teach for America Conference, Delta State University, Cleveland, MS

Keynote Lecture entitled “Teaching as Political Praxis: Potentials in Writing, Thought and Intervention”

Led a workshop on discussion and inquiry within the classroom

October 20, 2016 Mississippi State University, Department of Anthropology and Middle East Cultures Talk Series

Presented a talk entitled “‘There are No Men in Armenia’: Perversion and the Inadequacy of Homophobia”

## Conferences, Workshop Presentations, and Symposium Presentations

- June 9, 2024. "Capitalism and Death: A discussion between Tamar Shirinian and Harout Simonian." HayArt Cultural Center, Yerevan, Armenia.
- May 20-21. Boundaries of Revolutions Workshop, McGill University, Montreal, QC, Canada  
Invited to present a paper entitled "Revolution, Counterrevolution, and Entrenchment: Armenia's Turn Away from Liberation in the Long Post-Soviet Moment"
- May 10, 2024. New Directions in Queer Nightlife Workshop, Kings College, London, UK  
Invited to present a paper entitled "Nightlife as Queer Political Method"
- January 19, 2024. Queer Focus, Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA (Virtual)  
Invited to present on a panel entitled "State of the Field," the first in a series of panels about queer studies in the Slavic, Eastern European, and Eurasian region
- November 15-19, 2023, American Anthropological Association Meetings, Toronto, ON, Canada  
Roundtable Participant: "A Transitional Moment for the Discipline? Reflections on the 'Communities' Discussion on the Resolution to Boycott Israeli Institutions."  
Panel Discussant: "Armenian Identities in Flux: Identities in Transition or Transitions in Identities?"
- March 24-26, 2023. Infidelities: Armenian Studies Otherwise, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia  
Presented a paper entitled "Expanding the Sacrifice Zone: Toward a Deterritorialized Map of Environment, Women, and Many Objects in Between"
- February 3, 2023. Decolonization in Focus: Re-examining Research, Teaching, and Professional Practices in SEES, University of Pittsburgh Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies (Virtual)  
Invited to moderate a session entitled "Decolonization: Why Does it Matter?"
- November 19-31, 2022, American Anthropological Association Meetings, Seattle, WA  
Organizer, "The Condition of Being After: Thinking with and through the 'Post' in Armenia"  
Presented a paper entitled "Notes Toward a Political Economy of Fake News" on panel entitled "Unsettling Mediascapes: Anthropological engagements with a 'Post-Truth' World"
- February 11, 2022. Intersectionality in Focus Series, University of Pittsburgh Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies (Virtual)  
Participated in Spring 2022 Session "Talking about Globalization: Gender, Race, Dis/ability and Politics"
- February 21-26, 2022 American Historical Society Online  
Presented a poster, with Donna Braquet, entitled "The Queer Archive as Queer Community in the US South: Connecting Past, Present, and Future through Knowledge Production"
- November 29-December 3, 2021 Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Virtual  
Presented a paper entitled "The Figure of the Homosexual: Masculinity in and between Biopolitical and Traumatic Spatiotemporal Frames in Postsocialist Armenia" on a panel entitled "Masculinities in Crisis in the Middle East"  
Participated on a Roundtable Discussion entitled "Fault Lines and Fractures in the



- 2020 Artsakh/Nagorno Karabakh War”
- November 19, 2021, Society for Tennessee Archivists Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN (Virtual)  
Presented a paper, with Donna Braquet, entitled “Archive as Laboratory: Teaching Tennesseans about Queer History through Memory Work and Knowledge Creation”
- November 17-21, 2021 American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting  
Participated in a Roundtable Discussion entitled “Keeping the Fire Burning: Protests and Revolutionary Love”
- October 15-16, 2021 Gender and Intersectionality in Post-Soviet Armenia. Zoryan Institute, Toronto, ON, Virtual  
Presented a paper entitled “Gender Hysteria”
- April 29-30, 2020. Human Rights on the Edge: The Future of International Human Rights Law and Practice, Arizona State University  
Invited to present a working paper on transnational feminisms and human rights
- November 11, 2020. American Anthropological Association “Raising Our Voices” Series. Participating on a roundtable discussion entitled “Constructing Facts, Construing Reality: Anthropological Approaches to ‘Fake News’”
- October 16, 2020 Middle East Studies Association Meetings, Virtual. Presented a talk entitled “The Figure of the Homosexual: Queer Anxieties, Perverse Time, and the Survival of the Armenian Nation” on the panel “Queer(ing) the Middle East: Emergences and Potentialities in Times of Authoritarianism, Neoliberalism, Uncertainty, and (Im)Mobility”
- September 19, 2020 Critical Armenian Studies Collective Virtual Forum  
Invited to moderate a discussion on Armenian indigeneity with Hrag Vartanian
- November 15 – November 17, 2019 National Women’s Studies Association Meetings, San Francisco, CA  
Presented a paper on a panel entitled “Love and Revolution: Relational Transgressions in the Liminal Time-Space of Armenia’s 2018 Events” on the panel “Innovating Across Boundaries of Self, Space, and State”  
Participated in a Roundtable discussion entitled “Litany for Survival: Re-learning How to Write Personal Experience in a Post-Critical Academy”
- May 4 – May 5, 2019 Gendering Resistance and Revolution, Second Annual Feminist Armenian Studies Workshop, University of California – Irvine  
Invited to present a paper entitled “‘We Don’t Have a Daddy!’: Feminist Modes of Decentralizing Armenia’s 2018 ‘Revolution’” on the panel “When is activism revolutionary?”
- November 14-8, 2018 American Anthropological Association Meetings, San Jose, CA  
Presented a paper entitled “Nicknames and Sovereignty: Neighborhood Intimacies and the Limits on State Authority in Armenia” for a panel entitled “The Intimate Workings of Culture”  
Discussant for panel entitled “Decolonizing Queer Performance, Practice, Experience: Examples from Postsocialism”
- August 30 – September, 2018 American Political Science Association Meetings, Boston, MA  
Presented a paper entitled “The Illiberal East: Sexuality, Sovereignty, and the Other Side of Homonationalism” on a panel entitled “Gendered Sovereignties in

- the East”
- April 19-21, 2018 Biennial Meeting for the Society for Cultural Anthropology,  
[Displacements](#): A Virtual Conference  
 Presented a video essay (with sound, video, and photo) entitled “Presentlessness: Translating Negation into Affirmation”
- November 29- December 3, 2017 American Anthropological Association Meetings, Washington, D.C.  
 Organized a panel entitled “Temporalities of Hope and the Question of the Political”  
 Presented a paper entitled “Countering Presentlessness and *Post-Hope*: Negation as Future-Making in the Post-Soviet Republic of Armenia”
- November 9-12, 2017 Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies Convention  
 Presented a paper entitled “‘Post’ Temporalities: Postsocialism and Post-Hope in a Presentless Yerevan” on the panel “After Postsocialism?: New Ethnographies Framing the Future”
- May 12-14, 2017 Queer Places, Practices and Lives Conference III, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH  
 Organized a panel entitled “Queer Time-Spaces: Invaginating Temporality through Transnational Crossings”  
 Presented a paper entitled “The Perverse City of Ruins: Presentlessness, Future, and Affirmation through Negation in Post-Soviet Armenia”
- April 21-22, 2017 Gender and Sexuality in Armenian Studies Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
 Invited to present a paper entitled “A Room of One’s Own: Woman’s Desire and Sex in Private in the Republic”
- February 9-10, 2017 “This is how you are a citizen”: Humanities and Civic Life in Mississippi, Millsaps College, Jackson, MS  
 Presented a paper entitled “Thinking Race through Third World Solidarity: Decorating the World Black, Brown, Yellow, Pink...” on a panel entitled “‘All Eyez on Me’: The Complexities of Black Bodies in White Spaces”
- November 17-20, 2016 American Anthropological Association Meetings Minneapolis, MN  
 Presented a paper entitled “Decolonizing Post-Soviet Armenia: Productive Tensions in Theory and Ethnography” on a panel entitled “Another Soldier is Born, The (Body of the) Nation is Safe: #THEBESTHEROISTHEDEADHERO”
- April 22-24, 2016 Translating Armenians, Armenians Translated Workshop, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
 Presented a paper entitled “Does ‘Queer’ Translate to ‘Perverse’? Temporality, Nostalgia and *Post-Hope* in Post-Soviet Armenia”
- February 29, 2016 Duke Women’s Studies Graduate Scholars’ Colloquium  
 Presented a dissertation chapter entitled “The Figure of the Homosexual: Fetish, Freedom and Separation”
- November 18-22, 2015 American Anthropological Association Meetings, Denver, CO  
 Chair and Organizer of a panel entitled “In the Names-of-the-Father: Queer

## Relation to Authority”

Presented a paper entitled “The Homosexual as Fetish: The No-of-the-Father and the Congealment of National Anxiety”

June 25-27, 2015 Digital Queers Conference at The New School, New York City, NY

Presented a paper entitled “*Fakebooks* and Other Fake Encounters in Armenia”

December 3-7, 2014 American Anthropological Association Meetings, Washington D.C.

Presented paper entitled “Intimate Kin Encounters: Sociality in a Proper Armenia” on a panel entitled “Global Queer Politics”

July 31 – August 3, 2014 European Association of Social Anthropologists annual meetings in Tallinn, Estonia

Presented a paper entitled “Gender Hysteria: The Emigration of Armenians and the Immigration of Perversion” on a panel organized by the Network of Anthropologists of Gender and Sexuality.

May 16-17, 2014 Queer Places, Practices and Lives II Conference at the Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Presented a paper entitled “The Homosexual as Fetish: Nationalism in Post-Soviet Armenia”

April 24-26, 2014 Association for the Study of Nationalities Annual Conference, Columbia University, New York City, NY

Presented a paper entitled “Gender Hysteria: The Disintegration of the Family and the Birth of the Homosexual in Post-Soviet Armenia”

April 23-24, 2014 Conference on Sexuality, Human Rights and Public Policy, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

Presented a paper entitled “Paths of Perversion: Law Regarding Equal rights and Opportunities Between Men and Women in Armenia”

November 20-24, 2013 American Anthropological Association Meetings, Chicago, IL

Presented a paper entitled “(In)Visible Lesbians: Kinship and Women Desiring Women in Armenia” on a panel entitled “The Global Gays and Its Discontents”

March 13-15, 2013 Sexual Sovereignities: Citizenship, Governmentality, and Territory, American University of Beirut, Beirut, Lebanon

Presented a paper entitled: “Homosexuals to Baku!’: Protecting Armenia from Enemies of the Nation” as part of a panel called “Nation Building”

November 16-20, 2011 American Anthropological Association Meetings, Montreal QC

Presented paper entitled “Anxieties over Queerness, Anxieties Over Marriage: The Case of a Post-Soviet State” on a panel entitled “Sexuality, Gender, Nation, and Citizenship”

November 17-21, 2010 American Anthropological Association Meetings, New Orleans, LA

Presented paper entitled: “Belief in History: Postmemory in *Ararat*” on the panel “Film, Memory and Identity”

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Fall 2019 – present, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Feminist Anthropology

Decolonization

Visiting Lecture Series: *Decolonization, Anti-racism, Abolition*

Anthropology of Human Rights

Ethnographies of Trauma  
Queer Anthropology  
Anthropology of Gender  
Theories and Ethnographies of Emotions and Affects  
Ethnographic Research Methods  
Environmental Anthropology  
Fall 2016 – Spring 2019, Millsaps College  
Psychological Anthropology: Emotions, Culture, Personality  
Madness and Culture: The Anthropology of Schizophrenia  
Social Movements and Revolution  
From Stalin to Pussy Riot: The Politics of Gender and Sexuality in Socialism  
and After  
Thinking Sex, Thinking Gender: Understandings Across Time and Space  
Introduction to Cultural Anthropology  
Love and Power: The Anthropology of Kinship and State  
Summer 2015 – Duke University  
Thinking Sex: Sexuality Across Culture and Time

## **FIELDWORK**

March 2023 – present – oral history interviews on future political imaginaries from 1988-1994 with the help of research collaborator Lucine Talalyan  
June 2022 – present – archival research on the imaginaries of the future from 1988-1991 in the Gerard Libaridian Oral History Archive, Center for Armenian Studies, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
October 2020 – September 2021 – research on the effects of Covid-19 on LGBTQ+ experiences in East Tennessee  
June 2020 – August 2020 – Preliminary research on psychotherapy and health insurance  
July 2019 – Preliminary research on the effects of Hurricane Harvey on mental health, Houston, TX  
May – July 2018 – New research on the “Velvet Revolution,” feminist perspectives, archival research at the National Library  
June – August 2017 – New research on militarization and anti-militarization activism  
July – August 2014 – Follow-up research in Yerevan, Armenia  
August 2012 – August 2013 – Dissertation research in Armenia  
June – August 2011 – Preliminary research for dissertation in Yerevan, Armenia  
June – August 2010 – Preliminary research for dissertation in Yerevan, Armenia

## **SERVICE AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Member of Bylaws Committee, 2023- present  
Social Media Chair, 2023-present  
Cultural Anthropology Associate Professor Search Committee, 2022-2023  
Member of Undergraduate Committee, 2022-2023  
Cultural Anthropology Senior Assistant/Associate Search Committee, 2021-2022  
Cultural Anthropology Lecturer Search Committee, 2022  
Member of Diversity and Inclusion Council, 2020-2022

### **College of Arts and Sciences, University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Member, Steering Committee, Global Studies, 2023-present  
Member, Steering Committee, Women, Gender and Sexuality Program, 2023-present

### **University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Member of Research Designated Course Sub-Committee, 2023-present  
Member of Commission for LGBT People, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2022-2023  
Faculty Advisor for UTK Student Group: Speak Out Against Sexual Assault, 2020-2022

### **Professional Activities**

Member of Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award in the Social Sciences Committee, Middle East Studies Association, 2024  
Co-Editor, “Third Space” Section, *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies*, 2023-present  
Co-Chair, Association for Queer Anthropology of the American Anthropological Association, 2022-2024  
Communications Director, American Association of University Professors, 2023-2024  
Member at Large, American Association of University Professors, 2022-2023  
Editorial Board Member, *PoLAR: Political and Legal Anthropology Review*, 2022-present  
Program Chair, Association for Queer Anthropology of the American Anthropological Association, 2022-present  
Program Co-Chair, Association for Queer Anthropology of the American Anthropological Association, 2021-2022  
Participant, Cool Anthropology Brainstorming Workshop, Rice University, March 1, 2021

### **Millsaps College**

Co-Director Women’s and Gender Studies Program, Millsaps College  
Diversity Task Force, Millsaps College (2018-2019)



Human Subjects Review Committee, Millsaps College (2018-2019)  
 Project Director for the Feminist Studies Colloquium 2019, Millsaps College  
 Project Director for the Feminist Studies Colloquium 2018, Millsaps College  
 Faculty Advisor for Millsaps Student Group: Pride

## AWARDS AND GRANTS

2024-2025 – Haines-Morris Endowment Fund, University of Tennessee SARIF, and Department of Anthropology funding to support Post-Revolutions Workshop  
 2022 Society for Armenian Studies Small Grant to Support Panel for American Anthropological Association  
 2022 (with Donna Braquet) Honors and Scholars Research Fellows Program Mentor of the Year Award  
 Summer 2020 – University of Tennessee, Knoxville Graduate Research Assistant Award to support research  
 2018-2019 – Millsaps College Dean's Commendations for Teaching, Scholarship, and Service  
 2016-2017 – Millsaps College Dean's Commendation for Teaching  
 March 2018 – Mississippi Humanities Council Grant for Feminist Studies Colloquium  
 Summer 2011 – Duke University Graduate School Dissertation Research Travel Award  
 Summer 2011 and Summer 2010 – FLAS (Foreign Language Area Studies) Grant

## INTERNSHIPS

2012-2013 – Public Information and Need of Knowledge (PINK) NGO, Yerevan, Armenia  
 2012-2013 – Women's Resource Center, Yerevan, Armenia  
 2007-2009 – AK Press Publishing Collective

## CREATIVE WORKS

November 23-27, 2023. Հանգույցներ [*Hanguytsner*]. *Being in the (K)not*. Poem written in conjunction with Lucine Talalyan's exhibition in Yerevan, Armenia.  
 April 22, 2022. ["Diversity is being alone."](#) *Agitate! Journal*  
*Pieces, Pieces, Pieces*. Installation with photograph, drawing, text and sound. Shown at *Freedom (Not Yet) Again*, December 2017, Yerevan, Armenia. Also shown in Berlin, Germany in 2018 and Tbilisi, Georgia in 2018.  
 Organizing and conceptualizing the Queering Yerevan Happening in 2017, entitled *Freedom (Not Yet) Again*, December 2017. Yerevan, Armenia.  
 Conceptualizing the Queering Yerevan Happening in 2013, entitled *In and Between the (Re)public*, October 2013.

*Liminal*. Video Installation. Collaborative work with visual artist Lucine Talalyan. Shown in Yerevan, Armenia in October 21-23 2016 during the Queering Yerevan Happening *Moving the (B)order* and Vienna Biennale in October 2017.

## REFERENCES

Anne-Maria Makhulu, [amakhulu@duke.edu](mailto:amakhulu@duke.edu), Associate Professor in the Department of Cultural Anthropology, Duke University

Nelli Sargsyan, [nelly\\_sargsyan@emerson.edu](mailto:nelly_sargsyan@emerson.edu), Associate Professor, Marlboro Institute for Liberal Arts & Interdisciplinary Studies

Louwanda Evans, [evansl@millsaps.edu](mailto:evansl@millsaps.edu), Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of African-American Studies, Millsaps College

Bruce Grant, [bruce.grant@nyu.edu](mailto:bruce.grant@nyu.edu), Professor and Chair of Anthropology, New York University

Elyse Semerdjian, [esemerdjian@clarku.edu](mailto:esemerdjian@clarku.edu), Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marian Mugar Chair of Armenian Genocide Studies, Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University